

***CITY OF SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA***

**CITY COUNCIL POLICY**

TITLE	PAGE	POLICY NUMBER
	1 OF 5	
	EFFECTIVE DATE	REVISED DATE

**BACKGROUND**

The speed, volume and inappropriate behavior of motorists are adversely impacting a growing number of San Jose residents. Traffic is also having a negative effect on pedestrians and bicyclists, in particular near schools. The City has responded to these conditions with the installation of traffic control devices, roadway features, pedestrian improvements, the deployment of resources to enforce traffic and parking regulations, and the application of education programs. These efforts are referred to as ***traffic calming***.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Council policy is to state the general processes, responsibilities and outreach related to ***traffic calming*** so that interested parties can effectively access this City service. The time schedules contained in this policy are subject to available City resources and the level of active community involvement.

**POLICY**

It is the policy of San Jose to minimize the negative impacts associated with traffic on all streets, particularly within residential neighborhoods and near schools, by applying education, enforcement, and sound engineering solutions developed with strong community involvement. Traffic impacts that cannot be addressed through basic traffic calming services may qualify for assessment processes referred to as comprehensive traffic calming projects. All traffic calming services and projects will be coordinated with other transportation policies and will be consistent with the General Plan.



## **BASIC TRAFFIC CALMING SERVICES**

### **A. Request for Service**

Individuals or organizations that are concerned about the negative impact of traffic should contact the City's Department of Transportation (DOT) to request a traffic calming analysis. If the concern regards the enforcement of traffic regulations, the requester should contact the Police Department.

### **B. Services and Schedules**

DOT performs a wide variety of traffic engineering studies. The appropriate study will be performed to address the requester's particular concern and situation. Most engineering studies will be completed within two weeks of the receipt of the request. The application of some devices may be subject to independent policies and guidelines, such as those for crosswalks, stop signs, traffic signals, and bike lanes. Some devices require City Council's approval, which will extend the time before installation.

If traffic control devices (signs or markings) are needed, installation will normally be completed within three weeks of the study findings. In some cases capital improvements will require funding, which will extend the time of completion. The requester will be kept advised of the planned action and schedule. If education and/or public outreach activities are needed, the requester will also be informed of the schedule.

Traffic enforcement, provided by the Police Department, generally occurs within two weeks from the date of request. Due to the limited resources for traditional traffic enforcement, another form of enforcement of speed limits on residential streets is the Neighborhood Automated Speed Compliance Program (NASCO). This service involves the application of photo radar technology and requires substantial support of the affected residents. Access to this service is through DOT and takes approximately two months to implement. Timeliness of traffic calming projects will be reviewed using performance measures.

## **COMPREHENSIVE TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECTS**

### **A. Initiation of Comprehensive Traffic Calming Projects**

The Department of Transportation may program a comprehensive traffic calming analysis whenever an adverse traffic condition warrants an analysis. If an adverse traffic condition cannot be addressed through basic traffic calming services, DOT will automatically program a comprehensive traffic calming project. A comprehensive traffic calming project is generally the construction of a roadway design feature(s) that is intended to reduce vehicular speeds or volume of traffic. Residents and businesses that may be affected by the outcome of the comprehensive traffic calming project will be notified in writing of any planned actions and schedule.



**B. Adverse Traffic Conditions**

Streets that experience traffic volumes, speeds or crash rates higher than 10% above the citywide average for the applicable category of street will be considered to have an existing adverse traffic condition<sup>1</sup>. In addition streets that are deemed to have unusual conditions, like limited visibility of pedestrians, irregular roadway design features, or indications of unreported crashes, will also be considered to have an adverse traffic condition.

**C. Petition Process**

If DOT declines to perform a comprehensive traffic calming project, a comprehensive project may be initiated through a petition process. The petition, which will be supplied by the City, must have the support of 50% + 1 of the households on the section of street(s) that DOT staff determines to be within a project area. Written notices will be sent to any affected business informing them of the proposed action and schedule.

**D. Level 1 Traffic Calming Project and Schedule**

A Level 1 traffic calming project is intended to address pedestrian safety, speeding or other inappropriate driver behavior with devices that go beyond the basic traffic calming devices, but does not require City Council approval. Examples of traffic calming devices that fall into this category are traffic circles, road bumps, medians and chokers. DOT will work with interested parties to gain community input on a proposed traffic calming plan. Substantial community support in the project area is needed to finalize a plan. Substantial community support may be demonstrated through community meetings, petitions or other means.

Most Level 1 traffic calming plans will be permanently installed following finalization of the plan, without a trial installation. Some plans, however, may require a trial installation, which will generally occur within four months from the date the plan is finalized. The duration of the trial will normally be less than three months. During the trial period City staff will evaluate the plan. The community's input will be solicited and a final plan will be developed by staff, supported by the community and programmed for construction. Construction will normally be completed within 12 months. Trial installations will remain until replaced by the permanent improvements.

---

<sup>1</sup> Based on actual data, the average traffic volume, speed and crash rates will be determined for various categories of City streets. Using the local residential street category as an example, the average speed on streets within this category of streets is 26.0 miles per hour. If the average speed on a local residential street exceeds 26.0 miles per hour by 10%, or exceeds 28.6 miles per hour, the street would be considered to have an adverse condition.



#### E. Level 2 Traffic Calming Project and Schedule

A Level 2 traffic calming project is intended to redirect traffic in order to address excessive traffic volumes and requires City Council approval. Examples of traffic calming projects that fall into this category are full or partial street closures, traffic diversion islands and changing the direction of travel on a street.

Because the Level 2 traffic calming improvements are the most complex, they require more outreach and community input and more review by affected service providers. Based upon potential impacts of the proposed project, DOT will determine the affected project area. Level 2 projects require the active involvement of a neighborhood traffic committee and the support of the affected residents and property owners. The DOT Director will solicit volunteers and approve membership on the traffic committee. Committee members must own property or reside within the affected project area. If the scope of the project is revised the DOT Director may make adjustments to the boundaries of the project area and to the committee membership.

Based on relevant data and community input, the traffic committee and DOT staff will develop a proposed traffic calming plan. The traffic committee will distribute a City developed petition to all households, businesses and absentee property owners within the project area. The petition must have 50% + 1 support of the households within the project study area before a trial installation is presented to City Council. The duration of the trial will normally be less than six months. During the trial period City staff will evaluate the plan and community input will be solicited. Minor adjustments to the plan may be made based on the input received. Based on all relevant data and community input, DOT, in coordination with the traffic committee, will develop a proposed plan that will be presented to the community for its approval. A majority of the affected households (50% + 1) within the project area is needed to finalize a plan, which will then be presented to City Council for its consideration.

Generally, it will take from 8 to 16 months from the initiation of a Level 2 study to the City Council's approval of a permanent plan. Depending upon the complexity of the permanent plan, it may then take up to 12 months to design and construct the final set of improvements. Trial installations will remain until replaced by the permanent improvements.

### **PRIORITIZATION OF COMPREHENSIVE TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECTS**

In general, comprehensive traffic calming projects will be initiated in the order of the date programmed by staff or petitioned by the community (see sections A and C under Comprehensive Traffic Calming Projects). The DOT Director may give a project priority attention in consideration of one or more of the following factors:

- ***Crash Experience*** - 12-month crash history with special emphasis on crashes involving bicyclists or pedestrians.



- ***Excessive Speeding*** - High percentage of vehicles exceeding the speed limit.
- ***School Safety*** - Immediate safety concerns.
- ***Traffic Volumes*** - Traffic volumes that are significantly higher than on similar streets within the City.
- ***Pedestrian Facilities*** - Streets listed as a General Plan Pedestrian Zone or Corridor.
- ***Unusual Conditions*** - Streets with an unusual physical configuration or motorist behavior.
- ***Changing Conditions*** - Streets projected to experience an adverse traffic impact as a result of new development.

### **ADDRESSING TRAFFIC IN EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS FROM NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

All private and public development proposals will be reviewed for potential traffic calming issues and a study will be required when necessary. DOT, other City staff or consultants will be actively involved in the review of any proposed development that is determined by a study to create or increase an adverse traffic condition on an existing neighborhood. It is the intent of this involvement that the development will be designed or that traffic calming conditions will be placed upon the developer to eliminate or minimize the portion of the adverse impacts that are a result of the development. The Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Department will inform the developer and affected community by public notification of guidelines established for review of new developments.

### **COORDINATION**

Level 1 and Level 2 traffic calming projects will be coordinated with existing transportation policies and providers of emergency response services, public transit, school transportation, utilities and related services.